of Industrial Costs and Prices in their interim policy recommendations have recommended for a phased decontrol of prices of coking coal for steel sector and non-coking coal of grades A and B. These recommendations are under consideration of the Government. No decision has yet been taken.

Import of Shovel from Japan

3288. SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Northern Coalfields Limited had, in November, 1992, imported a shovel for use in Singrauli from Japan, through Balmer and Lawrie;

(b) whether it is also a fact that ECL had in December, 1992 imported a similar shovel from Japan through Coal India Limited;

(c) if so, what was the amount of excise duties paid in each case; and

(d) what are the reasons for having shovels through two separate agencies ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) and (b) Coal India Limited had imported one shovel on behalf of Northern Coalfields Ltd. (NCL) and two other shovels on behalf of Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (ECL) from Kobe Steel, Japan in November, and December, 1992, respectively.

(c) Customs duty paid for the shovel of NCL was Rs. 5,26,85,109/- and for ECL was Rs. 2,87,37,(332/-. CIL had subsequently filed a refund claim for the excess duty paid in respect of shovel of NCL.

(d) The shovels were purchased from the same manufacturer viz. Kobe Steel. However, NCL had engaged M/s. Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd., a Government of India Undertaking, as their customs and clearing agents for all imported consignments, including the shovel imported in November, 1992.

Seizure of Bank Accounts of CIL

3289. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that the Government of West Bengal have seized the bank accounts of Coal India Limited for non-payment of cess to the State Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Central Government have threatened to stop coal supply to Government of West Bengal as retaliation; and

(c) if so, what is the response of Central Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) to (c) According to Coal India Limited (CIL), their coal sale dues against power utilities under Government of West Bengal as on 31st January 1993 were of the order of Rs. 325.07 crores. The figures as admitted by the power utilities under Government of West Bengal was Rs. 319.08 crores.

The amount claimed by Government of West Bengal towards outstanding cess from CIL amounted to Rs. 307.14 crores excluding the amounts under appeal and such amounts for which assessment orders are not received.

No seizure of bank accounts of CIL by West Bengal Government has so far been reported. However, it was apprehended that wage payments to the employees of CIL and its subsidiary companies might get dislocated in the event of ordinance dated 22-1-1993 promulgated by the Government of West Bengal being made effective by issue of notice to Bankers and debtors of CIL under the provisions of that ordinance. This would have ultimately resulted in closure of mines and non supply of coal. In view of the situation arising out of the promulgation of the ordinance, discussions are being held between CIL officials and representatives of Government of West Bengal and also at Ministerial level with a view to settle the disputes .